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Pope Francis raises his hand as he stands outside an orange and yellow vehicle next to a mar

Pope Francis blesses an ambulance to donate to the Ukrainian city of Lviv, in this file photo taken at the Vatican March 26, 2022. Also pictured is Cardinal Konrad Krajewski, the papal almoner, who drove the ambulance to Lviv. (CNS photo/Vatican Media)

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Vatican City — June 30, 2023
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Donations to the annual Peter's Pence collection, which supports the work of the Roman Curia and funds the charitable activity of the pope, were down in 2022, but the amount of money the fund distributed increased significantly thanks to the proceeds of property sales, the Vatican said.

Overall, "in 2022 Peter's Pence income amounted to 107 million euros ($116 million)," the Vatican said. And the fund spent 95.5 million euros ($103.5 million) to support the work of the offices of the Holy See and the apostolic nunciatures around the world and to fund emergency aid to Ukraine and other countries facing devastation as well as to support the mission of local churches in need.

The Vatican press office released the report on the 2022 activity of Peter's Pence June 30, the day after the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul when the 2023 collection began in parishes and dioceses around the world.

Dioceses, foundations, private donors and religious orders -- in that order -- gave a total of 43.5 million euros to Peter's Pence in 2022, the report said. In comparison, the amount of direct donations in 2021 was 44.4 million euros.

In 2022 Peter's Pence also benefited from 63.5 million euros from "financial and other" income, the report said, explaining that "during 2022 a significant capital gain was achieved, thanks to the sale of real estate assets assigned to Peter's Pence Fund."

Officials in the Peter's Pence office were not available to respond to questions June 30, so it was not clear if any of the income came from the sale in 2022 of the property on Sloane Avenue in London's Chelsea district that is still at the center of a Vatican trial for financial malfeasance, including by Vatican officials.

The Vatican had announced July 1, 2022, that it had completed sale of the property for 186 million pounds ($223.3 million).

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Between 2014 and 2018, it is believed the Vatican Secretariat of State invested 200 million euros in purchasing the building. In addition, payments to brokers and debts collected on the property raised the total investment to 350 million euros.

At the time of the sale, the Administration of the Patrimony of the Holy See had said the losses on the property were absorbed by the "reserves" of the Vatican Secretariat of State "without touching funds from the Peter's Pence collection and donations from the faithful in any way."

However, some officials, including Cardinal Angelo Becciu, who is among those on trial, have said the "reserves" are, in fact, money set aside annually from the Peter's Pence collection.

As in 2021, the report said, dioceses and individuals in the United States led the giving, although the 11 million euros from the country was 2 million euros less than

the previous year. Catholics in South Korea, who donated 3.5 million, were second, while Italy was third with 2.9 million.

Using the 2022 donations as well as 50.3 million euros "funded through the proceeds from real estate management," the report said, Peter's Pence spent 93.8 million euros during the year: 77.6 million euros "to support the activities promoted by the Holy See in carrying out the Holy Father's apostolic mission," which includes funding the Roman Curia; and 16.2 million euros for "projects of direct assistance to those most in need."

More than 1.5 million euros went to support Ukrainians impacted by Russia's war on their country. Among the other 191 projects in 71 other nations were assistance to those impacted by flooding in Chad, help for the construction of maternity and pediatric wards at a hospital in Haiti, building a hostel for girls at a parish in Tanzania and building chapels for Indigenous communities in the Diocese of Alto Solimões, Brazil.